

Bill Shock



Let us hear from you!

Bill Shock

Bill shock is the unwelcome surprise that some consumers experience when their monthly wireless bill is larger than expected.

Bill Shock

On May 11, 2010, the Federal Communications Commission released a Public Notice asking whether it should adopt usage control measures that will help consumers avoid receiving higher than expected bills for their wireless communications services.



Specific Questions Raised in the Public Notice

- Do technological or other differences exist that would prevent wireless providers in this country from adopting similar usage controls now required by the European Union?

Types of EU measures

- Default notifications regarding wireless services
- Free texts detailing roaming prices for sending and receiving voice, data, and text messages
- Notice to customer when data usage is approaching preset limits
- When data usage limit is reached, carrier stops service until the customer contacts the provider

Specific Questions Raised in the Public Notice (cont.)

- To what extent do consumers currently have the means at their disposal to monitor – on a real-time basis – their wireless usage and [the means] to be aware of the consequences of exceeding their predetermined allocations of voice minutes, text message limits, or data usage?
- To what extent are U.S. providers already offering such monitoring and notification features and at what cost to the consumer and/or provider?
- Do U.S. wireless providers offer accommodations to persons with hearing, visual, cognitive or other disabilities to ensure access to monitoring and notification information?

Mobile Minutes Made Simple: Tips for Avoiding Bill Shock Now

- Understand your calling patterns for voice calls and ask your provider for a plan that best suits your needs.
- If you are an infrequent phone user, consider a pre-paid plan.
- Understand what your roaming charges are and where you will incur them.
- Understand your options for data and text plans.
- If you expect to take your phone outside the U.S. and potentially to use it for voice or data (including email), ask your provider what charges may apply before you leave.

Questions to Ask Your Wireless Provider

- How many peak and non-peak minutes are included in your plan?
- What are the peak and non-peak hours?
- Does the wireless provider charge more for roaming service? If so, how much?
- Does the wireless provider offer notice when a call generates a roaming charge?



Questions to Ask Your Wireless Provider (cont.)

- Are text messages included in your plan? If not, how much will you be charged to receive and send each text?
- Will your wireless provider notify you when the text messaging limit is approaching?
- Can you or the wireless provider block text messaging?



Questions to Ask Your Wireless Provider (cont.)



- Is your wireless phone web-enabled?
- If you have a web-enabled phone, are you charged even if you don't use the web?
- Do you have a data allowance in your plan?
- How much is the charge to access the web?
- Can the wireless provider notify you if you are approaching the data limit of your plan?
- Can you or the wireless provider block web access?